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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

December 22, 1971

ACTION

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MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY KISSINGER

FROM:

Marshall Wright *MW*

OBT

SUBJECT:

NSSM 141 - Implications for US Policy of the
Participation of The People's Republic of China
in Multilateral Diplomacy

We elicited the NSSM 141 study so we could look within a single frame-
work at all the problems likely to be posed by the PRC's emergence
onto the multilateral scene. The object of the exercise is to provide
ourselves with a conceptual basis for taking the disparate individual
decisions we will need to face.

Since we are not holding an SRG Meeting, we ought to give the Depart-
ments overall guidance by memo. The NSDM I propose (Tab A) instructs
the bureaucracy to deliberately eschew progress on the issues, in so
far as this is constructively possible, until the President's visit has
clarified the new US-Chinese relationship, and perhaps provided a
better basis for cooperation than that which now appears to exist.

None of the issues individually -- nor all of them collectively -- begin
to compare in importance with the President's Peking trip. Nor do any
or all of them commend themselves as issues well adapted to estab-
lishing a favorable atmosphere for that trip. The atmosphere of the
UN itself, and the nature of the issues, suggests that attempts to come
to grips with these issues are more likely to exacerbate than to harmon-
ize the atmosphere for the trip.

The problems we will face break down into the following categories:

- Those which in the immediate course of things we cannot
or have not been able to avoid;
- Those which we may have to face because of events beyond
our control (including decisions by the Chinese themselves);
- Those which may lie temporarily dormant unless we take
an initiative.

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Declassified/Released on 12/27/95
under provisions of E.O. 12958
; J. Saunders, National Security Council

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An overall conclusion from this survey is that very few issues need to be tackled now and that we should have little difficulty in postponing most problems at least until after the President's visit to Peking. (This assumes to some extent similar restraint in this period on the part of the Chinese themselves.)

Issues on Which We Have Had to Act

There are three problems in this category:

- The Indo-Pak war.
- The imminence of the December 31 expiration of U Thant's term precipitated five-power consultations and then full Security Council consideration. We could not, as a practical matter, refuse to participate without either agreeing to an interim extension of U Thant's incumbency or being prepared to see ourselves uninvolved in the choice of a successor.
- The nature of the General Assembly agenda forced us to decide what our attitude was to be toward the disarmament forum. We decided to support the scheduling of another meeting of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), making clear that the two questions remain open of participation by the PRC (and France) and of the US-USSR co-chairmanship. This, I believe, was a reasonable and intelligent resolution of the problem, for it involved minimal immediate movement -- and preserves a maximum of future flexibility.

Issues Which Depend on Events Beyond Our Control

-- The Middle East

The PRC has shown a disinclination to join the four-power talks, and there is no reason to suppose they will change that position in the next few months unless the situation in the area should seriously deteriorate. Should they wish to join, a reasonable posture for us would be the position that their support for Security Council Resolution 242 is a sine qua non for membership.

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-- Moves to Exclude the ROC from International Organizations

We have already in effect decided to try to retain ROC participation only in the International Financial Institutions and certain commodity arrangements. A crunch would come if the PRC sought admission in the IFI's, coupling this with a demand for the ROC expulsion. There is no indication they plan to do so in the immediate future, but if they do, we can continue low-key efforts for the ROC if there is a reasonable chance of success, and try to minimize the polemical confrontation with the PRC.

-- Taiwan, Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam

In regard to these issues, our posture with regard to the Chinese is primarily defensive. We need to decide how to react, rather than how to act. The Chinese could condemn our "aggressive occupation" of Taiwan or demand repeal of the UN Korean War resolutions to which we would be forced to respond, but with the adjournment of the General Assembly, the probability is virtually nil for any initiative before the President's trip. The State paper mentions positive initiatives we might take, such as suggesting UN membership for the two Koreas and the two Vietnams. But these are not decisions to be taken on the basis of the present study.

-- Africa and Micronesia

The adjournment of the General Assembly reduces the chances to near zero that the PRC will provoke a confrontation with us on these issues in the immediate future, and certainly not before the President's visit.

Issues on Which We Have Discretion as to Timing

On a whole range of more or less technical issues (seabeds, environment, outer space, drug control, UNCTAD, population control, UN finances, etc.) we do not yet know definitively the Chinese desires either as to participation in discussions or on substance. Accordingly, we could, if we wished, actively encourage them to participate (generally speaking, we can't keep them out if they want to come in) or initiate bilateral contact to ascertain their views (which might in some cases be quite constructive) and attempt to influence them. I believe such initiatives on our part would be premature before the President's visit for the following reasons:

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- a. Initiatives could be interpreted as pressure by us.
- b. They run some risk of engaging us in contentious exchanges.
- c. In no case is there an urgent requirement for such action.

Posture We Should Adopt

From this survey, I believe the following conclusions emerge:

1. Our overall aim should be to defer any action which might lead to hardening Chinese positions on multilateral issues, pending the President's trip.
2. Where we must deal with the Chinese, we should adopt a businesslike posture and deal with them matter-of-factly without appearing either to be unduly solicitous or aloof toward them.
3. Where they attack us, we must to some extent tailor the tone of the response to the attack, but should, in any case, strive to keep our statements straightforward, factual, non-polemical and brief.
4. We should not, in advance of the Peking trip, initiate bilateral discussions to head off such attacks, or moves aimed at involving the Chinese in multilateral issues, for there is too great a danger of triggering a negative reaction from the PRC.

Review of NSSM 141 Following the President's Trip

Given the clarification of PRC positions that should result from the President's Peking discussions, we should review NSSM 141 again following the trip. We will then be better situated to consider what positions we might take towards the PRC in the U.N. and other multilateral forums.

The NSSM 141 study is a good, concise briefing paper on the problems we will encounter with the PRC in the multilateral context. We have attached it at Tab C, in case you have time for it. Our Analytical Summary, originally prepared for the SRG, is at Tab B.

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RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the NSDM at Tab A.

Colonel Kennedy and John Holdridge concur.

Attachments:

- Tab A - Suggested NSDM
- Tab B - Analytical Summary
- Tab C - NSSM 141 Study

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